

## ***Execution: The Discipline Of Getting Things Done***

By Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan  
Crown Business, 2002

**Reviewed by MAJ John H. Grimes, an Army Acquisition Corps officer, serving at Oak Ridge National Lab as a student in the Training With Industry (TWI) Program.**

Two well-credentialed operators and trainers combined years of wisdom and talent delivering the business text du jour, *Execution: The Discipline Of Getting Things Done*. Larry Bossidy, the former Allied Signal CEO, and Ram Charan, a long-time executive-level leadership consultant, wrote a business text that could actually be considered a novel study on the discipline of leading operating success.

Volumes outline the topics of leadership development, organizational innovation, and operational plans, but *Execution: The Discipline Of Getting Things Done* deals with getting things done from a systematic, behavioral, and multilevel strategic (not merely tactical) viewpoint. What further sets off the novelty of this book is its unapologetic bluntness—it calls a duck a duck and provides many vignettes from both the good and the bad. Naturally, the results-oriented text emphasizes performance.

While individuals can achieve personal success capitalizing on exposure and image alone, companies must actually perform for long life and success. The authors argue that this topic of performance is the single largest issue facing the business world today, and leaders and scholars seem to “have their heads in the sand” concerning it. The point is made that most organizations have a hard time facing reality when it comes to recognizing “the gap” that exists between expectations and outcomes.

The text is logically organized in three parts: the discipline of execution, the building blocks required to have it (building blocks are a fundamental hallmark prevalently used throughout the text), and the how-to part to make it so. In an effort to make execution an organizational culture (not merely a program), the presentation follows a systematic approach, addressing the three core organizational processes of people, strategy, and operations. Leaders are both responsible and accountable, and the execution of all three processes is presented as the responsibility of the organization's leadership.

The 270 pages of *Execution: The Discipline Of Getting Things Done* are uncommonly full of wisdom and good examples. Some insights include: effective coaches ask incisive questions, bringing out reality; you change

the culture of a company by changing the behavior of its leaders; follow-through is the cornerstone of execution; strategies, owned and constructed by those who will execute them, must address the how-to or they will be immediate candidates for failure. *Execution: The Discipline Of Getting Things Done* is a true “user's manual” providing tools such as the Leadership Assessment Summary to help fill the leadership pipeline, sound recommendations to deal with poor performers, and proven techniques to connect strategies to people to operations. Tenacious follow-through and ardent accountability to standards are stressed throughout this book, unlike in any other contemporary business text I've read.

Overall, the book is refreshing in its newness of topic, and enlightening from the gravitas of the authors. This book could make execution and the gap between expectations and management's performance the key buzzwords of the day, returning vigor and accountability to strategic and operating plans.

During this difficult and critical period of transformation, the techniques and lessons on execution in this book form a worthy discipline for all Army leaders to pursue. *Execution: The Discipline Of Getting Things Done* is available on the Web for under \$15. It should be read by all serious leaders and operators.

## ***Secrets & Lies: Digital Security in a Networked World***

By Bruce Schneier

John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York, 2000

**Reviewed by Geoffrey French, a Counterintelligence Analyst with Veridian and former Logistics Specialist for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.**

Joint Vision 2020 describes one of the goals of the U.S. military as a real-time, Web-based, cross-Service logistical system. Even if such a system never exists, that goal captures the direction of U.S. logistics: increasingly available, increasingly powerful, and increasingly complex. For that reason alone, logisticians must understand the threats to and vulnerabilities of modern logistical systems. In his book *Secrets & Lies: Digital Security in a Networked World* (henceforth referred to as *Secrets & Lies*), Bruce Schneier lays out the basic threat environment, but more important, describes the inherent vulnerabilities in networked systems.

*Secrets & Lies* is an excellent guide to understanding risk in networked systems. The author goes beyond general threats, inherent vulnerabilities, and a laundry list of

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countermeasures. He demonstrates how these factors interact and explains how risk cannot be eliminated, but must be managed.

For that reason alone, the book is a worthwhile read. Schneier does much to dispel the notion that security can be attained through a single product or any simple solution. Although this sounds obvious, it is actually very insightful, especially considering the source. Schneier, a security technologist who has designed his own cryptographic algorithm, had argued in the past that cryptography could secure networks. In this book, he shows that it cannot—not by itself, not with poor implementation, and not without an entire security process in place that understands, mitigates, and accepts risk.

While an excellent introduction into the field of computer security, the book is no “Security for Dummies.” Although Schneier avoids technical descriptions, he goes into much detail about how computers and networks operate to demonstrate specific points. His section on cryptography, for example, is excellent. Without delving into prime-number theory or highly technical detail, he describes the multiple roles that cryptography plays and the types of security it can provide to an organization.

The book is divided into three parts: The Landscape, Technologies, and Strategies. These focus on threats, vulnerabilities, and risk management, respectively. The vulnerabilities section is by far the longest. It is quite an eye-opener, starting very simply with vulnerabilities in single systems. It proceeds to describe increasingly complicated networks and the growing number of weaknesses, not only in the networks themselves, but also in the human processes that control them. This is the section that anyone working with a sensitive network must read.

There are a number of important messages in this book. First, security cannot be proved true, but only be proved false by demonstration. Second, complexity is the enemy of security, and any system that needs to be both complex and widely accessible is going to have inherent vulnerabilities. Third, security is a process reliant on many different countermeasures, but most important, the people involved in its creation, administration, and function. The strength of Schneier’s work is that it avoids simple conclusions and does not give easy answers. Those who work with complex systems will appreciate his candor.

## ACQUISITION EXCELLENCE

### Contracting Activity Performance Metrics Created

Army Contracting Agency (ACA) Acting Director Sandra O. Sieber has identified the metrics that will be used to evaluate performance of the newly established ACA and its contracting activities at installation level. These measures are divided into four general groups and include one set for use by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, two other sets for the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, and a fourth set for use by the Army staff.

Although each of the metrics will measure the efficiency or effectiveness of a contracting activity by a slightly different “yardstick,” the results are expected to give an overall picture of the relative strength of installation contracting activities and to gauge the responsiveness to the needs of individual customers and supported activities. General categories will measure customer satisfaction, economies and efficiencies, government purchase card management, workforce professionalism, and support of socio-economic programs.

The ACA implemented the DOD Interactive Customer Evaluation (ICE) system to allow customers to submit real-time comments and receive rapid responses from managers. The ICE system requires no new hardware, software, or special passwords and is accessible from any computer with an Internet connection. ACA managers will be able to compare the performance of contracting activities across an ACA region or ACA-wide. Log onto <http://ice.disa.mil> for a tour of the customer module. Questions concerning ICE implementation by ACA should be directed to Bill Swan, ICE Site Manager, at (703) 681-1047 or DSN 761-1047 or [william.swan@saalt.army.mil](mailto:william.swan@saalt.army.mil).

The ACA was established Oct. 1, 2002, to realign a significant portion of the Army’s contracting resources and actions into one organization. The ACA is responsible for more than \$5.5 billion in annual obligations and will be one of the three largest contracting activities in the Army. The ACA’s primary goals are to synchronize contract management activities with the Installation Management Agency and to reshape customer support in a manner that is transparent to its customers.